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TEXT OF STATEMENT PRESENTED TO U.S. SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT, MANPOWER AND POVERTY.

BY- GUNDERSON, RALPH

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THE CALIFORNIA STATE OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY CONDUCTED A SURVEY OF LIVING CONDITIONS OF MIGRANT FARM WORKERS, OUT OF WHICH THE CALIFORNIA MIGRANT MASTER PLAN DEVELOPED. THIS STUDY DOCUMENTED THE FACT THAT 1,000 FAMILIES WERE LIVING OUT OF THEIR CARS, ON DITCH BANKS, IN FIELDS, AND UNDER BRIDGES, WITHOUT EVEN THE BASICS OF SHELTER AND SANITATION FACILITIES. BECAUSE OF THIS SITUATION, 932 FLYDOM UNITS WERE ERECTED IN 12 LOCATIONS IN 1966. NOW 500 UNITS OF A MORE DURABLE MATERIAL ARE UNDER CONSTRUCTION, WHICH WILL GIVE A TOTAL OF 1,551 HOUSES READY FOR OCCUPANCY. THE STATE OFFICE OF OEO IS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CHARGE A SMALL RENTAL FEE OF UP TO $1.00 PER DAY FOR THE HOUSES. (SF)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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TEXT OF STATEMENT PRESENTED TO
U.S. SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE ON
EMPLOYMENT, MANPOWER AND POVERTY

Delivered by Mr. Ralph Gunderson
Chief of Migrant Programs, State of California
Office of Economic Opportunity

My name is Ralph Gunderson, I am Chief of Migrant Programs in the California State Office of Economic Opportunity. I am also a member of the Southwestern Interstate Migrant Association. This association consists of representatives conducting programs and exchanging ideas for migrant farm workers with funds provided from Title III-B of the Economic Opportunity Act. The states constituting membership of this organization are California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado.

California ranks as the number one state in agriculture in the United States. This has come as a result of a great cooperative effort between Mother Nature, the farmer, the banker, and the farm worker. In spite of joint efforts on the part of growers and government, however, the migratory farm worker continues to be one of the most underprivileged citizens of our society. The Migrant Division of the State Office of Economic Opportunity has the mission to help these poor people to rise up from their lowly status, to help them become meaningful participants in the great American dream.

The March 1967 Report of the U.S. Senate Committee on Labor and Welfare stipulates that the direst need as spelled out by the migrant is wages; next on his list of priorities is adequate and decent housing. It is this problem of housing to which we have given most of our attention during the first two years of the

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California Migrant Master Plan.

This is a report on those first two years.

The California Migrant Master Plan is an outgrowth of an intensive survey of living conditions of migrant farm workers throughout the State. Conducted by the Farm Workers Health Service Section, State Department of Public Health, this study documented the fact that more than 1,000 families were living out of their cars, on ditch banks, in fields and under bridges, without even the basics of shelter and sanitation facilities.

When the bracero program reached its conclusion, the needs of these families were brought into even more dramatic focus, and the problem suddenly became one for all consumers. The farmers could not provide the food without the hands to do the harvesting and in spite of earnest attempts on the part of many growers working in league with public agencies, the demand for adequate housing could not nearly be fulfilled. Without such housing, it is difficult to recruit the domestic workers; without them it is impossible to get the food to the table.

Realizing that both the economy of the State and the well-being of the migrant farm family were tightly woven together, the California Migrant Master Plan began operations in August of 1965 on a grant from U.S. OEO of $3.5 million.

The immediate need was to provide some sort of rudimentary living conditions for migrant families in Stanislaus, San Benito and Butte counties. Within a matter of days, a new prototype in temporary housing had been set up at these locations, and these

first camps were the harbingers of what was to come. Provided with a place to live, and day care for their children, these families were among the first migrants to benefit from the War on Poverty in California.

Once the effectiveness of the program became apparent, the temporary housing began to rise in many places, so that by harvest time of 1966 we had some 932 of these Plydom units erected at 12 locations in seven large agricultural counties.

These migrant family service complexes served a total of 1,652 families made up of 8,545 individuals, while turning away 1,389 other families we were unable to accommodate. These people came from 29 different states and 45 separate California counties, as well as immigrant families from nine Mexican states.

The Plydom unit quickly showed that it was unsuited to the rigors of use and climate inherent in the program, and we experienced fairly heavy losses in the 1966 storms. Restricted at the outset to spending no more than $500 for the shelter frame, it became necessary to ask for an increase in this category to provide for more substantial units.

We stress at this time that we do not seek to avoid responsibility for the losses incurred with the Plydoms. We point out that the total economic loss in terms of the expenditures of our program was less than five per cent, and we contend that this was an acceptable ratio in a new program dealing with unknown quantities. We feel that the benefits of the demonstration far outweighed the losses.

After U.S. OEO had given its approval to a more expensive unit, we experimented with a number of other prototypes and were able to develop a prototype from plywood panels. This unit is illustrated in diagrams attached to this testimony, and is the model now in use, the model you saw earlier, but complete with inside bathroom facilities, hot water, and a more complete kitchen unit.

We now have 500 of the new units under construction, which will give us a total of 1,551 houses ready for occupancy this year. We estimate that 3,000 families, or more than 15,000 people will find shelter and basic facilities at these centers this year.

The California Migrant Master Plan has been funded for the upcoming harvest period to provide health care services for all family members who want and need them. This offers medical services to many who have never seen a doctor, and it is expected that at least 5,000 persons will be the beneficiaries.

Again this year we will be offering Day Care services for the children of the people who work in the fields. Activities will run from five in the morning until five at night in this program, which is widely recognized as a major step forward in the solution of the total migrant problem. Approximately 3,000 children from 2 to 5 years will participate in this project, which does so much to provide cultural enrichment and supplementary nourishment for underprivileged youngsters.

The State Department of Education administers programs in compensatory education for school-age children, and basic literacy and vocational education for adults to complement our Master Plan.

Unfortunately, the money earmarked for this purpose this year falls far short of the real need, and should be augmented to do the job ESEA is designed to do for migrant families.

We believe that the needs of the migrant farm worker family in California follow certain priorities. We have not buried our head in the sand with regard to the gradual increase of automation in the fields. We are aware of the fact that the migrant mainstream will tend to dry up in the future, and we think we know a little about the timetable.

We must provide decent housing first; this is essential to the migrant family, and to the grower, and to the consumer. Once we have filled this primary need, we can move to the areas of re-training and education, and other necessary and logical follow-up steps to solve the total problem.

Our latest grant from U.S. OEO completely deleted our request for more housing money. The priority of U.S. OEO staff is to stipended adult education now. There has been an absolute void of communication with the grass roots people on this issue. Elaborate documentation is available to show that housing is a dire need for migrants; none is available to show where the re-trained worker will apply his skills, and we object to this uncoordinated and arbitrary decision.

U.S. OEO further stipulated that no rental charge may be made for any of our housing services, a decision altogether in conflict with the self-help concept. The small rental fee we propose is not enough to pay the light bill, but it is enough to induce a

sense of responsibility and participation. A resolution from our Local Applications Advisory Board, attached to this testimony, eloquently presents our position on this issue.

In short, Gentlemen, we are asking for your good offices to help us help poor people help themselves. No one is big enough, wise enough, or strong enough to make these decisions all by himself. To the fullest practical extent we wish to afford representatives of the U.S. Government the opportunity to advise and consult in the development and execution of programs which directly affect California.

RESOLUTION

The Local Applications Advisory Board of the California OEO convened in Sacramento this 3rd day of May 1967, consistent with the American principle of people helping others to help themselves, passes the following resolution:

Therefore be it resolved:

THAT the proper approach to alleviating problems of poverty among migrant farm workers is to <u>assist</u> such people in improving their station, and,

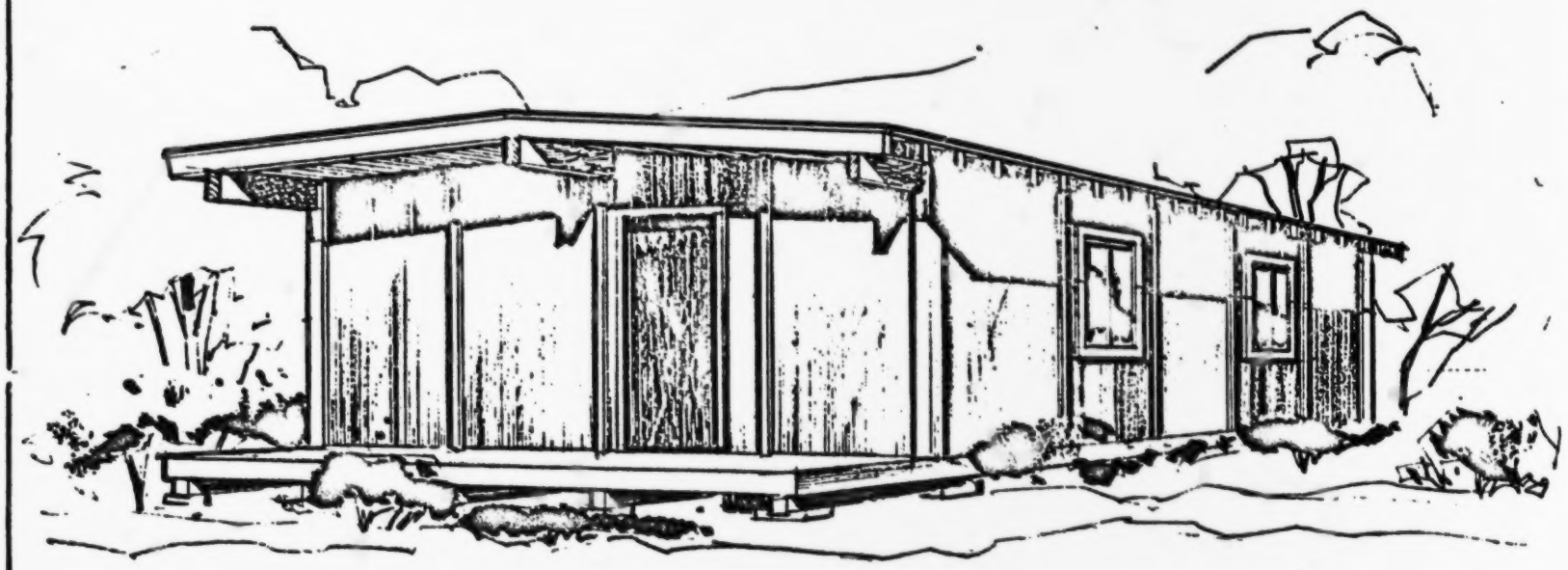
THAT the practice of giving services free, without imposing any responsibility on an individual to participate in the underwriting thereof is not consistent with the self-help concept, and,

THAT the State of California's proposal to impose a rental charge of up to $1.00 per day is altogether in keeping with this Board's attitude toward solving the problems of impoverished migrant farm workers and is in keeping with the precepts of the War on Poverty as outlined by the President and the Congress of the United States.

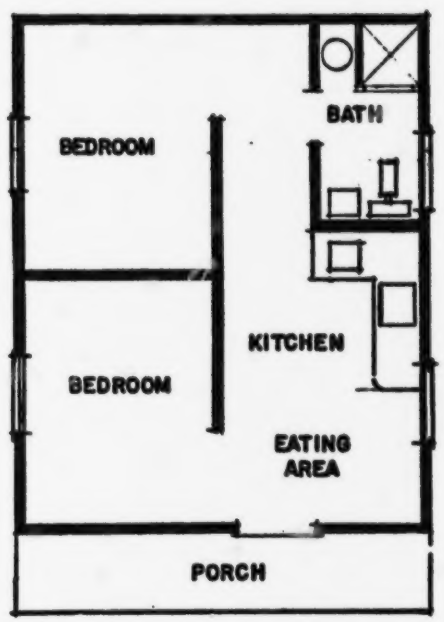
THEREFORE be it resolved that this Board recommends adoption of the rental charge as aforesaid set forth by the California Office of Economic Opportunity and the Federal Office of Economic Opportunity.

Local Applications Advisory Board members are:

Mr. John Ventura
Mr. Secondino C. Ramirez
Mr. Thomas E. Richardson
Mr. Mike Schultz
Mr. Harold Livingston

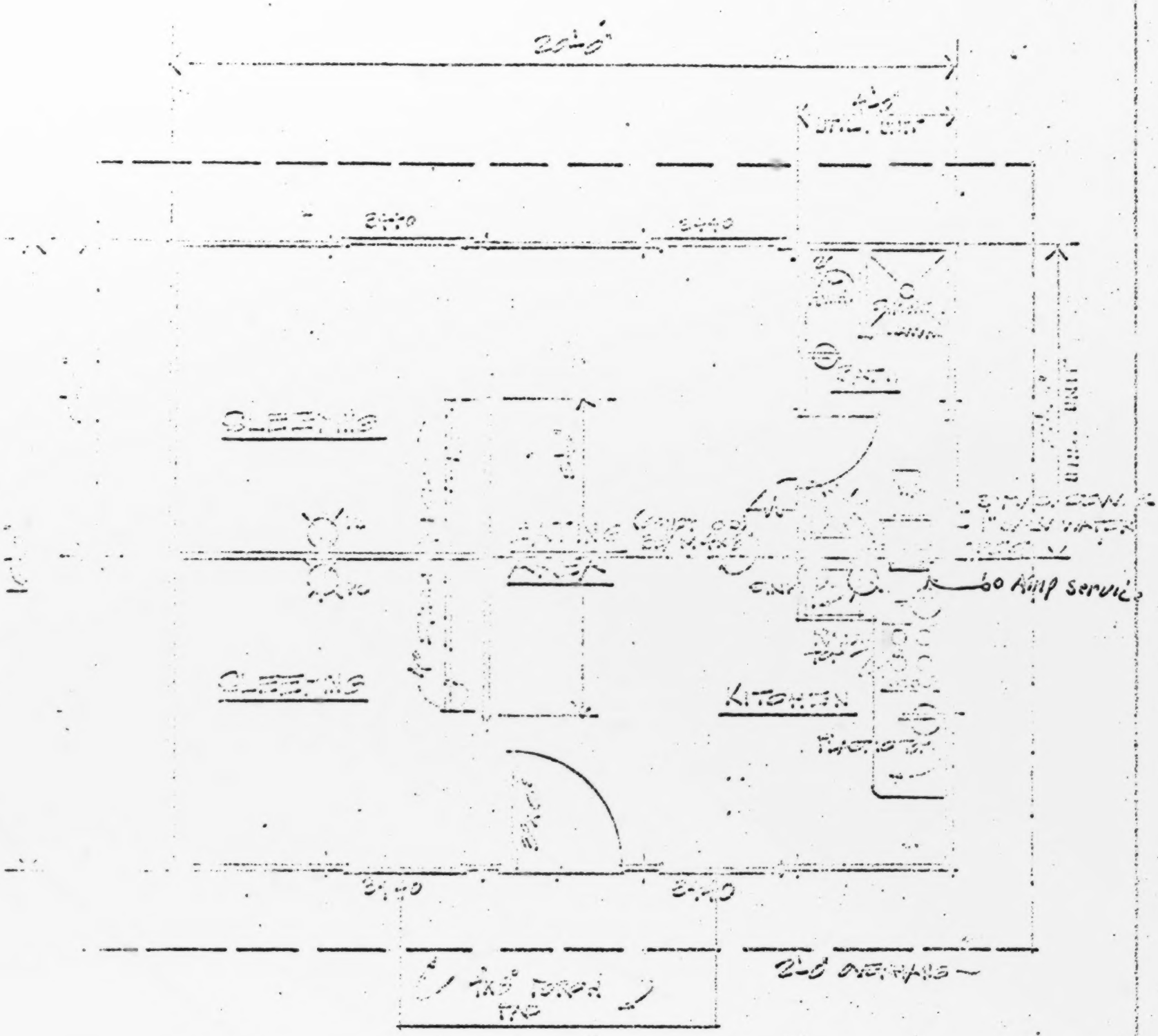


SEASONAL MIGRANT HOUSING



BILL OF MATERIAL

TREATED FOUNDATION PADS
4 x 6 FLOOR BEAMS
2 x 8 RIM JOIST
2·4·1· PLYWOOD
2 x 2 FLOOR PLATE
2 x 2 PORCH TRIM
2 x 4 STUD WALL PLATE & BLOCKS
2 x 4 STUDS
1/4" PLYWOOD FACING
EXTERIOR WALL PANELS
INTERIOR WALL PANELS
ROOF PANELS
4 x 6 ROOF BEAMS
2 x 2 TOP PLATES
2 x 4 TOP PLATES
2 x 6 TOP PLATES
3 x 4 WALL CLOSURES
1 x 4 PURLINS
1 x 6 EAVE TRIM
1 x 2 CEILING TRIM
1 x 6 BEAM SPLICE PLATE
1 x 4 CORNER BOARD
1 x 2 BATTENS
ROOF INSULATION
ALUMINUM ROOFING
EXTERIOR DOOR & TRIM
SCREEN DOOR
INTERIOR DOOR & TRIM
ALUMINUM SASH & SCREEN
SASH TRIM
KITCHEN CABINET
KITCHEN RANGE - ELECTRIC
HOT WATER HEATER
PLUMBING : LAVATORY
WATER CLOSET
SHOWER
KITCHEN SINK
MIRROR



FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4"-1'-0"

ROBERT E. CARTER AIA

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ARCHITECT

SHEET NO. 1 OF 2 SHEETS

1/31/67